

Week Ending Friday, October 17, 2008

**Remarks Following a Meeting With
Cuban American Community
Leaders in Coral Gables, Florida**
October 10, 2008

I have been privileged to know many around this table for nearly 8 years, as I've been President. I got to know them when I was campaigning for President. My little brother introduced me to these Cuban Americans with whom I work with one goal in mind, and that is the freedom of Cuba.

The policies we have in place are all aimed at giving the people in Cuba a chance to worship freely and to speak freely and to go in the public square and express themselves without fear of repression. And so I want to thank you all for your friendship during these years. And my encouragement is, of course, to continue to stand strong for the dignity of the people in Cuba.

You know, our Government has been very clear about our strategy, and that is, is that we will change the embargo strategy only when the Government of Cuba lets the people of Cuba express themselves freely. We will change our policy when the people running Cuba free people of conscience from the prisons. But until then we won't change, because our message is to the Cuban people: You're being repressed by a handful of elites that are holding back your great potential. And we will not put policies in place that allow them to benefit personally at the expense of the Cuban people.

You know, recently Ike hit Cuba very hard, and all Americans, whether they be Cuban Americans or otherwise, grieve deeply about the damage done to the average Cuban citizen. And so my Government, under the leadership of Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez, offered aid from the United States to the Cuban people. But that aid was rejected by the Castros, which should tell the people of Cuba and the people around the world that the Castro people are only inter-

ested in themselves and their power and not to the benefit and welfare of the Cuban people.

It's so sad that right off the shores of our great, you know, nation that believes in human rights and human dignity exists this dungeon. But someday Cuba will be free. Someday the people who are there will realize the blessings of freedom, and I want to thank the people around this table for working to see that day comes. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:09 p.m. at Havana Harry's restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and former President Fidel Castro Ruz and President Raul Castro Ruz of Cuba. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Remarks Following a Meeting With
G-7 Finance Ministers and the
Heads of International Finance
Institutions**

October 11, 2008

Thank you all very much. Good morning. Secretary Paulson, Secretary Rice, and I just had a productive discussion with finance ministers of America's partners in the G-7: Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Japan. I'm pleased to be with Prime Minister Juncker of Luxembourg, who is the President of the Eurogroup of countries, Managing Director Strauss-Kahn of the International Monetary Fund, President Zoellick of the World Bank, Chairman Draghi of the Financial Stability Forum. Thank you all for coming.

I appreciate the spirit and common purpose that these leaders have brought to Washington. We recognize that the turmoil in the financial markets is affecting all our citizens. Citizens are rightly concerned about